

# INTERNATIONALISM *and* *the* LEAGUE of NATIONS

## A SERMON

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## SYNOPSIS

The Microcosm and the Macrocosm. The Mystery of Nationality. Parallels between the individual man and the nation. Quotation from Prud'hon and from James M. Beck.

Christ's recognition of Nations. Internationality depends on and presupposes nationality. It is a mistake to suppose that Internationalism can be postponed: we have it actually now; and the question is, Shall the Internationalism that we have be a free League, or a free fight?

Illustration from the Flying Machine. Natty Bumpo Nations. When the Federation of our Thirteen States was proposed and opposed, George Washington said: "Try it." Why not try the League of Nations now?

No matter how collective it be, Self-sacrifice is at bottom individual. Our soldiers and sailors understand the appeal to Christian Warfare. Anecdote of Verdun. Conclusion.

# INTERNATIONALISM AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS\*

By GEORGE WILLIAM DOUGLAS, D.D. S.T.D.

Myriad-minded Shakespeare has a passage which fits in with my assembled texts. He speaks of

"The prophetic soul of the wide world  
Dreaming on things to come."

I doubt if in human history there has ever been a time when the condition of mankind could be better described than in that passage, along with my texts from Holy Scripture.

Those who converse in the language of the Schools sometimes speak of the Microcosm and the Macrocosm, the little and the great world, the small organism and the universe of organisms. You and I are each a little cosmos, and yonder is the world, with many others in between. And the parallels and points of resemblance between the little and the larger organisms are no less wonderful than each is in itself.

It is to the resemblance between two of these that I would call your attention today; for it helped me in preparing to speak—as I was urged to do—on The League of Nations, a subject which is in all our minds. President Wilson has defined it as a League to promote the reign of law in nations, and in a commonwealth of nations based on the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind.† Now as the individual man is in relation to his

nation, so is the nation to the society of nations. Both are instances of the Microcosm and the Macrocosm; and the wonder in this case is hardly less than that of any other of the innumerable antitheses of being which we find grouped throughout the universe. This particular antithesis, which we are to consider this afternoon, is covered by the term Internationalism.

The wayfarer does not always "see the forest for the trees"; and already you and I have been troubled by the intricate details of the proposed League of Nations. So I shall try to stand with you high enough up and far enough off to see this matter in the large way, so as to render the main fact evident. It would be both unwise and unchristian to underrate the difficulties. They are not to be disposed of as "mere details." They must be studied as close as we can get to them, after we have had a vision of the noble mass—after that, not before. Paul, on the road to Damascus, first had his heavenly vision: afterwards, for three years and in seclusion, he pondered the difficulties of it. But it was because he had had the vision first, and let it grip his soul, that in old age he could say: "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the

## \* Texts:

Jesus said, Make disciples of all nations.

—Matt. xxviii., 19.

Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

—Joel iii., 14.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh. . . . Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

—Acts ii., 17.

Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

—Acts xxvi., 19.

The building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . from Whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth . . . maketh increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

—Ephes. iv., 13, 16. (R. V.)

† Quoted from *The New Republic*.

heavenly vision." Like Paul, we have had our vision of the League of Nations thrust on us. Shall we, in dealing with it, have Paul's faith and patience?

Nationality is one of the profoundest mysteries of mankind, and the marvel of our time is the sudden insurgence of nationalities that had been suppressed. Like single human beings in themselves, the aggregation, the incorporation of these in nations baffles our ability to explain. But in recent years Natural Science, by its demonstration of the atom, the electron, and the cells in our individual bodies, has rendered the resemblance between a nation and a man more striking than ever. That entity which each of us knows best—his own body—how similar it is to the larger entity, the nation! Your body is a concentration of a million cells—infinitesimal bodies—each with a self-hood of its own, but all unified by an informing force which we term your soul. We can see the aggregation of cells, and we take it as an expression of your self-hood; yet nobody ever saw the very *you*. Nobody knows just where you are, or how. You are hidden away in a body of many bodies; and although physiology detects that these are pulling and pushing one against another, and that within any seven years quantities of the cells cease to belong to you, nevertheless you, as an entity, continue. You find yourself (in the phrase of Christ's parable of The Prodigal Son, "*you come to yourself*") in what Science estimates to be an affiliation or society of innumerable bodies; and as an organism you are dependent on the mutual service of the constituent particles; and this organism, as a whole, depends for life on its power of adjustment to its environment. If any one of the cells loses its self-hood, it wanes and dies; and if enough cells lose their self-hood the whole body dies. But even before death, from protoplasm onward to old age, there occur in you prophetic, though lesser, changes. Yet throughout these everybody who knows you finds

in you a mind of your own, a memory of your own, a will and conscience of your own; in short, a soul so personal as to be capable of persisting in the continuous process of change that stamps you with outward and inward marks sufficient for your friends to notice, though often you may not notice, or may forget them. Likewise you yourself, throughout these changes, are conscious that you have felt, that you have thought, that you have had experience—that you have grown. Once you were not all that now you are. Your personality—evasive like sunshine and shadow—is a reality of which you are aware; and you count on your neighbors, and they on you, each expecting of the other good or evil according as you and they may choose.

Now for the parallel. The Nations, after their mysterious manner, are likewise entities—composite individualities, the citizens corresponding to the cells in the body of one man. A nation is an organization of individuals, consolidated and controlled by an informing spirit. It has a mind, a character, a will, of which the loyal citizens partake. Even the disloyal feel the stress of the national spirit; and usually after a time this spirit is imbibed by most of the citizens. Undoubtedly the citizens, each for himself, have individuality: they have different qualities and opinions: they debate, and pull opposite ways, and form parties within the whole. But even a stranger can perceive the informing spirit that is common to them all. True, sooner or later, they all die; but others come instead, and the nation lives on, and meets other nations by the way, and reacts on them in the wide world. One with another, accordant or contrary, the nations of mankind live and move and have their being, much as you and I singly do. And for an historian who believes in God, it is profane to deny what the Bible and Christ affirm: that, as with single men, so with nations, God punishes them and blesses them accord-

ing to their acts, holding them responsible. So do their own courts, when an individual man has a claim against his nation; and so does one nation with another.

All which the great French historian of Law, Prud'hon,<sup>†</sup> as far back as 1848, summed up in these grave words: "There is in human society, as developed by civilization, a living being, endowed with an intelligence and activity of its own, and as such an organic unit." And our American lawyer, Mr. James M. Beck, in his address last October to the American Bar Association, applies all this to our present situation. "In this time of blood and iron....the supreme issue of this titanic war is the collective responsibility of all nations for the peace of the world.....Justice by thorough reparation to men of good will. Justice by punishment to men of ill will. The American soldier will not be satisfied with mere changes of the map."

Now the League of Nations proposes, in effect, to fulfil Christ's mandate, "Go ye, and make disciples of all nations"—not all *men*, you observe, but *nations*. Our modern conditions were forecasted by our Lord. We accept Darwin's dictum about "the survival of the fittest," but many of us have failed to see that the strongest nations are not fit unless they be adaptive. As in natural history the mastodon is gone, and the elephant going, so in political history a nation which will not adapt itself to new circumstances is doomed. And the League is a plan of national adaptation on the lines of Christianity, which, more and more evidently, is the science of self-adaptation to God's Will for nations as for individual men. Christian Internationalism does not intend to destroy nationality, but to fulfil it between nations by the same sort of mutual consideration that enables one nation, or one family, to continue in healthy life. Of course without vigorous nationality there could not

be internationality. Either of them without the other is not only logically but practically impossible. Bernhardt claimed, just before the War, that "England must be Germany's vassal"; but he did not see that thereby he was striking at Germany's own nationality as much as England's. Now he has found that out. If the one be, so must the other. The nationality of either is unconscious testimony to the internationality of both. The instinct of babies is to grasp for oneself alone: the instinct of young nations appears to be similar; but the mature experience of nations, like that of individuals, demonstrates that it pays to share on just terms. Man is gregarious—a herding being. So the herds, or nations, if they love life and would fain see good days, must live in league with one another.

It is sometimes claimed that Christ is against patriotism and for internationalism; but that is wrongly put. Christ simply anticipated, both economically and spiritually, the international experience of mankind. And what a ring of patriotic nationalism there is when Christ weeps over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, if thou hadst known the things which belong unto thy peace!" We can but enter into His intensity when we here (as soon we shall) sing, one and all,

"The star-spangled banner, long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of  
the brave!"

What Christ wants of nations is not less, but better nationality.

"'Tis not of life our limbs are scant.

More life and better is our want."

Like an individual man who imbibes Christ's Spirit, so a nation enlarges and lifts itself by entering into the life and needs of others. For the other nations are now too many and too near to be ignored. There are "multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision," as the day of the Lord draws near. Given the similarity between the nation and the

<sup>†</sup> Quoted by James M. Beck, address on "The Higher Law", at the Cleveland meeting of the Bar Association. *Journal* of October, 1918.

individual, why should it be deemed impracticable, if Christ demands of the larger entity what has so benefited the smaller?

For mark you, brethren, Internationalism is not a matter which can be postponed to the future by those of little faith. We've got it now. Mrs. Partington with her broom, trying to sweep back the Atlantic Ocean, cuts no more ridiculous a figure than they who fancy that Internationalism is not in the world to stay. Those who see this are taunted by those who don't with being "idealists"; whereas they are "realists" who use their eyes; and it is not even foresight: it is hindsight. They are seeing what has for some time been. Others, who cannot quite ignore the fact, admit that "Internationalism is in the air." Oh no, it is on the ground. It is actual, existing Internationalism that makes William von Hohenzollern as uneasy now in Holland, as Holland is uncomfortable to have him. Modern economics, and the inventions of Science have settled that. What with railways and aeroplanes and submarines; with the telephone and wireless telegraphy; with engines that remove mountains; with commerce that girdles the globe, and the ability of bankers to buy and sell on the same day in any and all the great markets; with China and South Africa and the islands of the Pacific able this past week to inform the Allies that they don't want ever again, in whole or in part, to be colonies of Germany—I say that in the face of such positive intercommunication of our whole globe, in less time than it used to take New York to communicate with San Francisco, it is fatuous to claim that Internationalism is a matter for the far future to decide. What the future will decide is, what sort of Internationalism there shall be—mutually destructive or mutually helpful, Christlike or devilish. Von Bernstorff in one of his recently discovered letters—bits of his secret diplomacy—remarked: "There is too much Publicity in the United States."

Before long those of his stripe will be saying there is too much Internationalism in the whole world. Truth will not always be in bondage. Did not Christ say, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"?

It is like the Flying Machine. With the precedents of years to support them, almost everybody insisted that man is a creature who cannot fly: that the laws of nature, and what is good for human life, were dead against it. But following after Professor Langley (who broke his heart over it), two brothers of American birth and spirit, did not take such assertions for the whole truth, though most men laughed at them for their pains. At last one evening the brothers said to one another with a certain awe, yet confidently: "Our machine is ready. Now let's fly." So today men fly in thousands. Yet the Wright brothers did not contravene a single law of nature or of man. They only exercised their own free American minds and wills, whereby they applied old laws to new conditions. The old elements are still here, and the old laws still operative; but the genius, the address, the soul-power of decided men have outgrown the confinement in which they had been held: though, even so, it was not revolution but evolution. And further, mark you this. The first result of flying was as deplorable as the result so far of Internationalism. Both led to the most awful war that history records,

"and there rained a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling in  
the central blue."

Thus the question now is not, Shall we have Flying Machines, and shall we have Internationalism, but, How in both cases shall we use what we have got? And as to Internationalism. Shall it be a free league or a free fight? The German Crown Prince, as lately reported, said: "This was a stupid war," and for Germany it was that, and infinitely worse. President Wilson voiced the verdict of rightminded men, when he said,

in his last reply to Dr. Solf, "Germany is a criminal nation." As for her stupidity, it was partly this: that, while clever and longheaded enough to see that Internationalism was bound to be, Germany thought that by acting early she could divert it to her own selfish ends, so as to become an international tyrant, instead of being one member of an International League. That way madness lies. The stars in their courses are pointing to a pass where neither isolated Nationalism nor selfish Internationalism will work. What is left, then, for the poor Prodigal to try, except Christian Internationalism and the League? And as for criminals, each nation now has them of its own. Every community has them now. Yet in spite of them cities exist, and on the whole prosper, though the population of some cities is larger than that of some nations used to be; and what a mess of minds and races there is in New York and Chicago; yet we have our United States. So if single nations exist in spite of criminals, why may not a League of Nations be firm and wary with criminal nations, and still do its business in this world? Christ is expecting of one nation with another no more than what, to a considerable extent, is already operative in the best nations individually where Christian civilization has made way. In Christian civilization justice is the antiseptic, and love the motive-power. It is a task for the business mind, for the scientific mind, for the historic mind, for the social mind, for the legal mind educated to be just to all, and for the religious mind, to work out internationally what the best nations have been doing nationally. And Lord Robert Cecil was not exaggerating when he said that the glorious victory of the Allies will be hardly distinguishable from defeat, unless thereby are laid the foundations for a lasting peace—that is, unless bad Internationalism is replaced by good. And if only *we* have faith as a grain of mustard seed, why should we

be ashamed, any more than the Wright brothers were, of tentative procedure, and small beginnings and painful accidents, in this evolution of mankind? "They did it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." And what an exhilarating prospect it is! How "the thoughts of men are widening with the courses of the suns!" How the sense of general justice is growing!

Do you remember Natty Bumpo, the Pathfinder in Cooper's story of "The Prairie", how he preferred the lonely, stealthy prairie life, separate and untangled; and when other men approached, he felt constrained, and drew away? So, in the case of Internationalism, there are Natty Bumpo nations, which are loth to form a league for mutual benefit, and for justice all round. But they are out of date, though they are dying harder than the venerable Pathfinder did.

In America a century and a half ago there was the same hesitation and skepticism when the Thirteen States were coming together as our United States. But when Hamilton and Jefferson and their followers were arguing for and against the Union, George Washington, —fearless but persuasive—said, "Try it." It was tried; and the result all the world knows. Relatively, the contradictory moods and methods of those Thirteen States rendered the problem of their union in one Commonwealth hardly less stupendous than is our problem; and now, as then, we shall never know whether our League is feasible until we try it.

Are you asking how soon the League shall be, and after the Peace Conference, how rapidly arranged? God only knows. We have the beginnings already, and their ultimate development is among the likeliest of future events; for without it civilization faces bankruptcy, which for the civilized is unthinkable. Yet when our Lord's disciples asked Him how soon His prophecy would be fulfilled, He declined to tell. He even said He could not tell: only God the Father knew. But let us pray and work for it



wisely and warily in the same confidence; for we, like them, in the light of Christ's sacrifice, are but praying for the success of Christ's command, "Make disciples of all nations"; and Christ's commands, in God's own time and way, come to pass.

That brings us back to the point where I began this course, and where I wish to close. Even such as you and I are may not, must not, sit with folded hands, waiting for the public to act; for, partly it depends on us, and on others like us. You may make self-sacrifice as collective as you please, but at bottom it is individual still.

"Little drops of water,  
Little grains of sand,  
Make the mighty ocean,  
And the pleasant land."

Self-sacrifice today is as personal as it was nearly nineteen hundred years ago in Gethsemane under the Pascal moon, when the Man of Sorrows withdrew Himself, and fell on His face, and prayed saying, "Father, not My will, but Thine be done." In our midst this winter there are many, going and coming, from homes that have been pierced as by a sharp sword, because duty called their dearest and these were "ready to be offered." Sunday after Sunday there are men in uniform—soldiers and sailors—here; and when I see you, brothers, I know that at my mention of self-sacrifice you understand. It was not asked of you to the same extent as of those others, of whose end in battle you soldiers say, in cryptic phrase, "he got his"; but you too were "ready to be offered." Much that you went through remains inarticulate. Nobody can quite speak out such an experience. It was laid on you to practice: the vision came, and you were not disobedient to it. And in consequence we are all breathing an atmosphere that vibrates with the deed of you and others like you. The appeal to it had this advantage: it was not in the form of an abstract idea: it is elemental, and grips the common man, thereby il-

lustrating the Bible statement that man was made in the image of God. This appeal is not merely to the brain, but to an instinct and an emotion operative in us all, if we allow them to be so. As a doctrine of the Church—a dogma, that is, a presentation in selected abstract terms—you might not have accepted it so readily. For the intelligent acceptance of dogmas, special training of the mind is as much required as, in another field, special training for the soldier is required. Yet I sometimes wonder if you know how near your life has brought you in this respect to the Kingdom of God in Christ. For the psychology of entire Christian Warfare you have only, in your soldier-phrase, to "carry-on" in peace-time what on the battlefield you learned, and have helped us all to learn. Ere we pass from what we call War to what we call Peace, I ask you to listen to my proof of this.

An American woman, who was caring for the orphaned children in France, was going over the Verdun battlefield with the officer who had been in command. "Tell me," she said, "what gave your men the strength for that terrible conflict?" The officer took her to a dimly lighted room in the heart of the citadel, where there was an altar with a large Crucifix above it. "It was here," he said, "that my men got their strength. It was here that Verdun was saved." Now that officer was the moving spirit of it all; and many, many other officers and soldiers and sailors were of the same mind. A great crisis in human history, which all can see, turned on the practice of self-sacrifice which the fighters got secretly from the Cross of the historic Christ: it was a solitary act. And when the League of Nations comes, it will depend from the same solitary centre, whence the stern sense of individual duty, fired by Love to the uttermost, illuminates alike the darkest and the brightest passages of human life—both in what we, in our shortsightedness, call

ordinary, uninteresting life, and in the most heroic.

"The time draws near the Birth of Christ." In this clime we are wont to think of it as wintry weather; but indeed it was the springtime of the nations, and of the human soul. Come, let us adore Him. Come, bow at His feet. For, as Bishop Boyd Carpenter said (was it not spoken in this very pulpit?) "Christ taught love, and has been ever since love's picture to men; and I feel sure that there will not be a soul, to whom the final revelation comes, who will not see that in the evolution of our world there has been one law, one life, one love,

and that that law, that life, that love have been the law, the life, and the love unfolded to us in Jesus Christ our Lord." †

O little town of Bethlehem!  
How still we see thee lie;  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;

Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel.

*George William Douglas.*

† Noble Lectures, p. 180. Quoted in *Modern Churchman*, November, 1918, p. 353.

